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WITH the present number the STUDENT enters upon a new volume. In a comparison of the future outlook of the journal and the cause which it represents with the outlook of ten years ago as it is recalled by the editor, two or three significant things are noticed. Ten years ago the war between "the Old" and "the New" had just begun in England and it was only viewed by us from a distance. At that time ideas which are now familiar to every man who reads, were practically unknown and unheard of among us. To-day, we ourselves are in the midst of the battle. The forces of the older and newer schools are arrayed over against each other in fierce conflict. Hard words have been spoken on both sides, and both sides have done the great cause of truth a serious injury. It is an easy thing to be imprudent in speech. It is difficult in discussion of any kind to maintain the proper spirit. It will be universally acknowledged that, in the biblical controversies of the past twelve months, North, South, East and West, grave mistakes have been made, mistakes the serious character of which will not be appreciated fully for many years. Dogmatism is a thing to be deprecated, and it is a fact worthy of notice that those who hold and teach views entirely new are as likely to be dogmatists as are any others. But what is to be the issue of it all? Can anyone question? When the battle has been fought and the smoke has cleared away, when those who have survived the conflict have passed away, the children of the next generation will reap the advantages of the victory, provided the victory has been secured by those who represent the truth. Should falsehood and error have conquered, those who follow us will be

compelled to fight again, for sooner or later truth must prevail.

Again we say, the situation of to-day is very different from that of ten years ago. Is it a better situation? Undoubtedly. No man can read the columns of our religious press, no man can listen to the addresses made from time to time upon our religious platforms without clearly perceiving that an advance has been made all along the line. There is, in spite of the doubt and anxiety which universally prevails, a deeper appreciation of the elements which make up true freedom of thought and speech.

IN the work of presenting Bible truth we are prone to forget that the world includes more than one class. We ourselves have an unswerving faith in the accuracy and truth of the biblical narratives and in the infallibility of their teachings. The source of this faith is not always known to us. In many cases it is faith inherited; for one inherits a faith in religion and in the Bible, just as he inherits political opinions. This faith is frequently an intelligent faith, yet also frequently a faith for which we can give no reasons. It is not on this account to be called in question, for it is evident that a man's faith cannot be limited to those subjects which he has himself investigated. If this canon were established the faith of most of us would be of necessity very limited. We who have this strong faith and interest often forget that as a matter of fact we form but a part of a great community, and that a part, not always, perhaps not often, in the majority.

There is a second party, with members of which we come into contact every day, made up of men and women whose minds are filled with skepticism, honest skepticism, in reference to the historical value and even the religious value of the sacred books which we hold in such high esteem. Of this second party some do not believe at all in a special divine inspiration. Others profess to believe, yet always doubt. A miracle? It is not possible. Prediction? It is incredible. We must confess that there is sometimes a rational skepticism, which from one point of view is better than a blind

faith; especially if the blind faith undertakes to dictate theories and opinions which have no real basis. But often honest skepticism is something which we cannot understand. To us the Bible is a book which bears on every page the stamp of its divine origin. Why does it not have power and influence with these our neighbors? If it has really come from God why does it not exert so strong an influence that no one may be skeptical concerning it? We recognize the existence of this skepticism, but we fail, for the most part, to make any provision for it. Our friends in the line of Bible work do not include this great, and, I must say it, growing class of people. We teach the Bible to those who seem to believe it. We make little or no effort to secure the attention or the conviction of those who are professedly skeptical. In other words, we do our work largely without reference to that class which is in some respects the most intelligent in every community, in some respects the most influential. Is not this a mistake?

But there is still a third party distinct in every respect from the two that have been mentioned and perhaps larger than both combined. The members of this party maintain an attitude of utter indifference toward the Bible. They live and act as if no Bible were in existence. They cannot be said to be *dis*-believers for they do not give it sufficient attention to warrant an opinion of their belief. The most that can be said of them is that they are non-believers. This attitude of indifference is due in part to the many absurdities which those who are wrongly called friends of the Bible have at various times taught as Bible truths; in part to the countless differences of opinion which exist on every side as to the teaching of Scripture on the simplest subjects; in part to the seeming remoteness of all the questions involved, for these people forget that real Bible questions are living questions of the day.

How many schemes of Bible work make provision for the second and third of these three classes, and yet is any plan of work complete which does not make such provision? If these three classes of men exist in every community, and if

the Bible is intended for universal use and acceptance, it follows that in any well planned course of teaching there should be three distinct ends in view. An effort should be made, by destroying such conceptions inherited by tradition as have proved to be erroneous and unfounded—in other words, by clearing away the rubbish, to furnish a broader and firmer basis on which to raise a vital and, what in these days is essential, an intelligent faith. It is not enough to believe. One must know why he believes. If we have inherited from the past what is nothing less than rubbish, it is worse than criminal to ask men to believe it. Credulity is not faith. To be sure, one must be very sure that this or that is rubbish before he is satisfied to throw it aside. It may be better to believe too much than to believe too little. It is best, however, to believe only what is true. The truth is never strengthened by additions. To destroy and to build is the order followed by every great reformer. It was the injunction given to Jeremiah. It was the method employed by our Saviour. It is the only true method. Even good teaching built on error in time becomes error.

ANOTHER purpose to be kept in mind is, by showing that when scientifically interpreted these records contain indisputable evidence, not only of great worth, but also of divine origin, to remove all ground for doubt or basis for skepticism. In the former case, the order was to destroy and then to build. Here that order is reversed, viz., to build and then to destroy. In the one case the destruction called for was that of false ideas which had grown up about the Sacred Word. In the latter case the destruction is that of wrong ideas entertained concerning the Holy Book. In the first case the ideas to be destroyed were those of friends, in the latter case, those of enemies. It is a significant fact that the Bible's so-called friends have been its worst enemies, and that in many cases the work of its professed antagonists have been so overruled by a kind Providence as to make more apparent the divine truth revealed therein. We who believe in this Book may well be confident that, so far as it is correctly understood, it

will permit no skepticism. It is misinterpretations of the Bible which furnish the occasion of all skepticism. It is possible, without in any sense diminishing its claims to divine origin, so to present these claims and the great truths which make up its contents, that skepticism will be banished far away. Our Christian world is full of skepticism to-day, but it is a skepticism which could easily be removed if only right methods were employed, and in the employment of these methods a proper point of view adopted. It is those who present the claims of the Bible, not the skeptics themselves, who are responsible for a large part of the existing skepticism.

A THIRD purpose in all our work should be, by pointing out the unique character of the significance of these records, to arouse if possible in place of the heartless indifference so widespread—an indifference more deadly than skepticism, a warm and living interest. That there is too little interest no one will deny. That there are certain kinds of interest as injurious as they are helpful we must acknowledge. That interest which literalizes, shrivels, and thus directly destroys, is not an interest to be cultivated. It is possible on the other hand to do a work which will revivify these records; which will make these old books live again as they once lived ages ago. This work has been done and is being done; but, alas, there is too little of such work. There are too few who are able to do it.

Bible work, we repeat it, which does not have these three things in view, is not the Bible work for the present day. The secret of the whole matter lies in the two facts, (1) that to-day men think, and the Bible must be taught in such a way as to appeal to the thinking man; (2) that there are so many subjects for thought, men's minds become so full of other things, the Bible is apt to be neglected. Something real and living is needed, not a kind of work more dead than death itself.